

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Harue Yamasaki, 77, retired camp store owner,
Hamakua Poko

"Oh, it was cheap, before. Even the turnover is ten cents, was. Biscuit was two for five cents. Cone sushi was five cents one, too. Only that anpan doughnut, I raised the price. Because before, was two for five cents, but afterward, I sell three for ten cents."

Harue (Iwanaga) Yamasaki, Japanese, was born January 3, 1903, in Makaweli Kauai. She quit school after the third grade and went to work cutting grass in the cane fields.

In 1922, Yamasaki moved to McGerrow Camp, Puunene and worked as a maid at a haole supervisor's home. Later, she did laundry for plantation workers, charging them two dollars per month. In 1924, she married her first husband.

In 1936, she married Seichi Yamasaki, a camp store owner in Hamakua Poko. They ran the store together until 1954, when her husband died. Yamasaki continued to operate the store with her children, getting up early every morning to make homemade pastries. She closed the store in 1962.

Today, she enjoys cooking, craftwork and sewing. She lives in Pukalani.

Tape No. 7-29-1-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harue Yamasaki (HY)

January 28, 1980

Pukalani, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mrs. Harue Yamasaki. Today is January 28, 1980, and we're at her home in Pukalani, Maui.

Okay, Mrs. Yamasaki, can you tell me when you were born and where you were born?

HY: Makaweli, Kauai.

WN: What was the date of your birth?

HY: Nineteen three [1903]. January 3.

WN: When did you come to Puunene?

HY: Puunene I don't know. I cannot remember.

WN: You worked for a haole family for awhile?

HY: Yeah, yeah.

WN: That was in Puunene?

HY: Yeah, Puunene.

WN: So, about 1922

HY: Before I go to H. Poko [Hamakua Poko], I was working at Filipino clothes, like that--wash. At haole house. McGerrow Camp. So, 1936, I went H. Poko [where her store was located], see?

WN: How many years did you live in H. Poko?

HY: About twenty-six years, I think.

WN: Twenty-six years? Okay. So, [before that], you worked for a haole family for about three years [in Puunene]?

HY: Oh, when was that? About twelve years, I think, I work. Haole house.

WN: What did you do?

HY: When I was girl, I was working at Mr. Taylor's house. Cooking, wash, ironing, yeah? Then I got married.

WN: When you were working for Mr. Taylor, how much did you get paid?

HY: Oh, first, they was paying only twenty-five [dollars], yeah? Then, afterwards, they paid me thirty dollars a month.

WN: And how many hours a day would you work?

HY: From morning, 7 [o'clock] to night--sometimes 7 [o'clock p.m.]. Sometimes, 8 or 9, because when they get company, have to work more late. So, usually, it's 7 [o'clock a.m.] till 7 [o'clock p.m.].

WN: So, you did sewing, cooking--what else?

HY: Wash, ironing. Not every day, washing, though. Cooking is every day.

WN: You cooked three meals a day?

HY: Yeah. Every day, I go. Yeah, uh huh. Because mister was at the mill, yeah? He was engineer, or something. Machine shop. Then, he come to lunch, home. But missus didn't come home, lunch, because she work at Paia--Paia Plantation, I think. She was secretary, or something.

WN: This Mr. Taylor, he was a plantation boss?

HY: Yeah, yeah. At the machine shop, he was the boss.

WN: He lived in McGerrow Camp?

HY: No, no. He stay Haole Camp. (Laughs) You know the post office place--Puunene? Right in front of that post office. [Some of the houses are still standing today.]

WN: And that's where most of the bosses lived?

HY: Yeah. All the haoles living all that row, but now, Japanese and everybody stay inside there.

WN: Later on, you started doing laundry for men?

HY: Oh, that was later when I quit the haole house, yeah? Taylor's house. Yeah. So, after that, I had the children, see? I got babies, so I cannot go to the haole house--Taylor's house. So, I

quit over there, and I stayed home. Then, I washed for the Filipinos and the haole house.

WN: So, you worked in the haole house until you got married in 1924, yeah?

HY: No, 1923. [HY looks at paper.] I wrote down little bit. (Laughs) First was, I married when I was twenty-one. Nineteen twenty-three [1923], I married. October. Then, my [first] husband got sick, so he went up Kula [Sanitorium]. Then, I start to work Filipino's clothes. Part-time, I go to the haole house--wash and houseclean.

WN: But you started having children, so you had to stay home?

HY: Yeah, I stay home, and I wash the Filipino's clothes. But at haole house, I had to go and wash.

WN: So, when you started doing laundry for Filipinos, you still went to the haole house, too?

HY: Yeah. Nighttime, I iron. When I don't go to the haole house, I wash at home on Sundays and Mondays.

WN: And when you went to the haole house . . .

HY: Three times a week. Three times a week, I wash--haole house--washing and houseclean.

WN: Who watched the children?

HY: My mother. I had my mother, so.

WN: When you washed clothes for Filipinos, how much you got paid?

HY: One month, two dollars.

WN: Per person?

HY: One person.

WN: And then, how many people you wash for?

HY: Oh, about, sometimes thirty-five, sometimes thirty-seven.

WN: How often would one man bring his dirty laundry to you? How many times a week would you wash one man's laundry?

HY: Every week [i.e., once a week].

WN: He would drop the laundry off to you . . .

HY: Three times I go out, but ironing, I go iron at nighttime, see?

So, my mother helped me, too--washing. Oh, about three days I have to wash because thirty-seven people. I was washing only hand, see, not machine. (Laughs)

WN: So, you used washboard?

HY: Yeah, yeah, on the board.

WN: You hung the clothes out to dry by your house?

HY: Yeah, yeah. I hang on the line, yeah? Outside. Clothesline. (Laughs)

WN: Must have had plenty laundry, yeah?

HY: Yeah. Usually, I used to hang out nighttime because daytime, Puunene--McGerrow Camp--was dusty. That's why, if nighttime, it's all right. Not too bad.

WN: How did you know whose clothes belonged to who?

HY: Oh, I put the number on. (Laughs)

WN: Oh, the bangō?

HY: Not the bangō, but my own number. So I can remember.

WN: How would you pick up their clothes? They bring?

HY: They bring. They bring the dirty clothes. And when I through, I go take to the house, see? Because all around. Not far place, that's why. All stay nearby. Camp, yeah, that's why. You don't have to take long place.

WN: How long would one man have to wait for his laundry?

HY: One week. So, every Sunday, they go bring their dirty clothes [to me]. Saturday, I take the clean clothes [to them.] And I have to mend, too, all the broken place. Oh, some people, they bring all (laughs) kind of clothes--working clothes, yeah? You have to patch all for them.

WN: This was mostly Filipinos?

HY: Most Filipino. And other three days, I used to go haole house.

WN: And when did the Filipino men pay you?

HY: Every payday. When they get the pay. Plantation, regular, they go pay.

WN: Once a month?

HY: Yeah, once a month. That time, they go pay. (Chuckles)

WN: You'd have to keep track of each person--how much he owed?

HY: Yeah, yeah. Uh huh.

WN: At two dollars a month--and you had about thirty-five men--you got about seventy dollars per month?

HY: Yeah. Uh huh. And I had three children and my mother and myself. Five have (laughs), so I have to work hard.

WN: So, nobody else was working? Your mother wasn't working?

HY: No, no. Only, she was helping me. Washing, like that, yeah? The children was all small.

WN: So, you made seventy dollars a month. Oh, plus, you were making from the haole house, too, yeah? How much?

HY: One house, they go pay me \$1.25 one day. So, three days I go.

WN: About \$3.75? So, \$3.75 for one week?

HY: Yeah, yeah.

WN: Was that enough for you folks to live comfortably?

HY: Uh huh [yes]. It was hard, you know.

WN: When you were living Puunene, where did you get your groceries?

HY: Oh, they had the Camp 5 Store, and Kahului get [Japanese] Mercantile.

WN: Kahului? You used to go shop, or . . .

HY: No. They come [take] order, and they deliver. So, you don't have to go anywhere. Only, if camp store--we used to go to the Camp 5 Store. From McGerrow Camp to Camp 5 Store, we have to walk and buy something for our use.

But usually, I used to buy from the Kahului store [Japanese Mercantile] because more easy for me. Don't have to walk around, yeah? They go deliver. They come [take] order about two, three times [a week], they used to come. They order, and next day, they go deliver.

WN: You paid right away?

HY: No. Just one month. (Laughs) When I get paid, I go pay with that.

WN: How far away was your house in McGerrow Camp to Camp 5 Store?

HY: You have to go inside the cane field and go, you know.

WN: About how many minute walk?

HY: If walk, takes about half an hour, I think. Half an hour. Go, come back--one hour, I think.

WN: So, you used to wait for them to come take your order?

HY: Yeah, yeah.

WN: One day, the Camp 5 Store [salesman] would come, and then, maybe another day, Kahului store would come?

HY: Yeah, yeah. Uh huh.

WN: How you knew who to buy from? How you knew what you going buy from Camp 5 Store and what you going buy from . . .

HY: Oh, anything--when I need--I go order. Nothing special. I won't order (laughs) too much because it's hard, eh?

WN: What about the prices? Any difference? Was prices the same at both stores?

HY: Price? Not so different, though, I think. (Pause) Camp 5 Store was the plantation store.

WN: What about small kind private stores?

HY: Private store? Oh, just bread, or something, we buy sometimes. They had one Kobayashi Store [owned by Larry Kobayashi, another interviewee] in same camp--McGerrow Camp. We used to buy bread, like that, from there. When get company, we buy ice cream or something, see?

WN: Oh, you mean, last-minute kind things?

HY: Yeah, yeah. [From] camp, we don't buy the groceries.

WN: How come?

HY: It's more higher than the big stores. They charge more, that's why.

WN: You remember, when you was in Puunene about 1925, how much one 100-pound bag rice cost?

HY: Oh, yeah, we used to buy a hundred pound, though. Because they don't have small kind, yeah, before. Rice. They didn't have--not like now--ten pound or five pound, they don't have. They had 100-pound or 50-pound.

WN: What if you had small family?

HY: (Laughs) It's enough. A hundred pound, we cannot eat one month. Because the children was small, so.

WN: How often you would buy 100-pound bag rice?

HY: Oh, I don't remember, though. (Laughs)

WN: You remember how much cost?

HY: Oh, that time, was five-something [dollars]. The cheapest was Hundred-pound, how much was? I remember five-something [dollars] was. (Pause) When wartime, was highest, yeah? Five-something, or six.

WN: That Kobayashi Store, what else did they sell besides rice?

HY: They used to sell bread, ice cream. Afterward, I don't know because I went away, see? H. Poko, so.

WN: They sold can goods?

HY: Candies. Yeah, candies, they had.

WN: Can goods, too?

HY: No. I don't know. I cannot remember.

WN: You remember any peddler--da kine peddler man come around?

HY: Oh, yeah. They used to come from Wailuku, yeah? That man's name was what? He had no more feet, one side. But he drive, and he used to come. That man used to bring all kinds of can goods, and vegetable, candy . . .

WN: He sell fish, too?

HY: Yeah. He used to bring fish. Before, not like now, you know. Now, they get kamaboko and tempura, like that, yeah? But before, they didn't have. Only New Year or Tenchō-setsu [Emperor's Birthday], they call, they have. We had to order that.

WN: Where you ordered from?

HY: From that peddler or from the store. Fish market man used to come, too. He used to live Kahului. What was the name? He's not living now, though.

WN: Mr. Terashita?

HY: Not Terashita. Old-time kind (laughs), cannot remember.

WN: So, about 1936, you moved to H. Poko?

HY: Yeah, moved to H. Poko.

WN: Can you tell me how come you moved to H. Poko?

HY: How come? (Laughs) They called sewa-nin, Japanese. Somebody came and asked me if I wanted to go H. Poko. So, I think. I like to make cooking, like that, I like, so. Mo' betta than washing [clothes], I thought, see? So, I went.

WN: Okay, wait. Somebody came to your house and asked you . . .

HY: If I wanted to go H. Poko--married to Yamasaki.

WN: Oh, to marry him. Oh, Yamasaki was looking for wife?

HY: Yeah, yeah. He didn't have wife for long time, I think. He had two sons. But, I don't know. The lady went Japan, or something, I think, and she didn't come back.

WN: So, somebody came to your house and asked you if you wanted to marry this man?

HY: Yamasaki.

WN: How did you feel about that?

HY: (Laughs) Half-scared, but, "If I go, I wonder if I can stay long, or what?" On top that, my mother was blind. It was hard for me to go along by myself because [when] the children come big, you need more money.

So, I thought, "Oh, I think I better go."

And I like to bake and cooking, like that, so. (Pause) Yeah, he was cranky man.

(Laughter)

WN: Before you went up, then, you didn't meet him at all?

HY: Only once. We went to get license--marriage license. After that, I didn't. When they want something to talk to me, the sewa-nin--that lady--she used to come.

WN: "Sewa-nin" is "go-between"?

HY: Witness.

WN: So, you brought your mother and your children to H. Poko?

HY: Yeah, I took my three children and my mother. Five of us went H. Poko.

[We lived] at this upstairs house. Little more big, but cannot see in that picture, yeah? [HY examines photograph.]

WN: The house that you moved to in H. Poko, was it better than the house you were living in Puunene?

HY: Oh, house, I didn't think about it, though. Then, we moved from this house to other house. Behind the store, we had one house over there, so. Over there, somebody was living, but they been move to Paia, so we been move inside there. More bigger than this house [i.e., the house in the photograph], though. This is big because they get upstairs and downstairs, yeah? But almost same. But I don't like upstairs. Hard for me. (Laughs) When you tired, you don't want to walk up the upstairs, yeah?

WN: When you first saw the H. Poko store, what was your husband selling in the store?

HY: He used to sell saimin. And fish, meat, vegetables, candies. Groceries, he didn't sell when I [first] went. After about three or four years, we used to sell groceries. Because the camp [plantation] store was broke. They been shut the store--plantation store--by the office. They had two plantation store.

WN: In H. Poko?

HY: Yeah. But one, they been close. So, they had only the camp store one. That's why, after that, we used to sell groceries. Because some people, they had hard time to go buy, yeah?

WN: So, when you went there, had two stores?

HY: Three.

WN: I mean, two camp [plantation] stores?

HY: Oh, two stores and one Yamasaki Store--Yamasaki's Restaurant.

WN: How many years were you there before one camp [plantation] store closed down?

HY: After? Not too long, I think, was. About I don't know when they closed, though.

WN: Was it before the war [World War II]?

HY: Yeah. I think was before the war.

WN: So, after they closed, had only two stores in H. Poko?

HY: Uh huh [yes]. Only ours and the camp store--plantation store.

WN: Did the plantation store sell the same kind things?

HY: No, they don't sell fish, like that. Meat or raw stuff, they didn't sell. Only the groceries, they used to sell. Or orange, like that. Apples and orange.

WN: Can goods?

HY: Can goods, candies. Bread, they had. They used to buy from Nashiwa [Bakery], I think.

WN: You folks didn't sell bread . . .

HY: Now, they get plenty bread from all--Honolulu--homes. Before, they didn't have. Only from Nashiwa. They used to deliver. I used to buy from Nashiwa too--bread and small kind of pastries, yeah? I make [pastries] myself, but certain stuff, I don't make, so I used to buy from them.

WN: When you started at your husband's store, what did you do in the store?

HY: What I did? Oh, I bake. And I sell [to] the customers. First time, they used to charge, yeah? Filipinos, they used to charge. So, I have to help him [HY's husband] to bill, like that. That time, he didn't have the . . .

WN: Oh, yeah. Bookkeeper?

HY: But he used to take that one--Portuguese was--in Makawao. I don't know that Portuguese name, though. Once a year, he [HY's husband] take over there.

WN: The books?

HY: Yeah. He used to take all [to] the tax office, like that. He used to take himself. But the one-year kind, he used to take to that Portuguese man. I don't know what the name, but.

WN: So, your husband was the one who kept track of the sales and the records?

HY: Yeah, yeah.

WN: What did you bake in the store?

HY: I used to bake turnovers--coconut turnover, apple turnover--and biscuit. Cone sushi and manjū. Doughnut. I used to make anpan doughnut. They like that. No store had--[even] now, too. That's why, sometimes, they come ask me to make for them.

WN: Anpan doughnut?

HY: Yeah, yeah. We call it anpan doughnut, but. (Laughs)

WN: Had hole inside?

HY: No, no. Get beans inside. Not with the yeast, though. With butter and eggs, like that.

WN: Where did you get your ingredients from?

HY: From the wholesale store--Kahului. First they used to call Puunene Store, yeah? Bumbai, they call A&B Store. And Paia Store. They had Paia Store, one, yeah?

WN: The main one? The main Paia Store?

HY: Yeah, yeah. Big store, there was, by the mill.

WN: Did anybody else work in the store?

HY: For me? No, first time when I went, there was one lady and two Filipinos working for Yamasaki. But after that, they quit. Mrs. Yamashiro had baby, so she had to quit. After I went, only my husband and me, and my daughter used to help.

WN: What did your daughter do?

HY: Oh, help all kind. Serve, you know, like that. Serve the customers.

WN: So, the store was actually one restaurant, too?

HY: Yeah, yeah. Saimin. And when wartime, the Marines used to come. So, we make hamburger, fry potato and steak, fry eggs, like that. We used to serve them.

WN: And had tables inside?

HY: Uh huh [yes].

WN: How many tables had?

HY: We had long table--one--and two round kind. Round tables.

WN: From what time to what time, you folks open?

HY: Oh, usually, we used to open from about 4:30 in the morning, and about 9 o'clock [p.m.] we used to close.

WN: Nine o'clock in the night?

HY: Uh huh [yes]. Night. Nine [o'clock] afternoon--p.m.

WN: So, what time would you have to start in the morning to cook and get everything ready?

HY: Yeah, from 4:30. Morning time.

WN: Do you start cooking at 4:30?

HY: No, when the customers come, the saimin like that, we make already, yeah? Every day, we used to make the saimin and make ready for that. When the customers come, we can boil and make the soup, and serve. All the pastry, too. From morning, we go make. Pie--turnovers like that--we used to make it nighttime and put in the ice box. In the morning, we bake. We had a big gas stove, so.

WN: So, from 4:30, you could go inside your store?

HY: Yeah, yeah. And when only myself time, sometimes I used to wake up at 2:30 and go.

WN: After your husband died [in 1954]?

HY: Yeah. The working people want to take that anpan doughnut like that, turnovers to the They work at Kahutui, some people, at Maui Pine [Maui Pineapple Company]. So, he take the orders sometimes, and he go come back, and he asked me to make for them. In the morning, when he goes to work, he take that [the baked goods with him]. (Pause) Yeah. That's why, I think, now demo, I cannot sleep good, you know. Funny, no? (Laughs) Early in the morning, I get up. Yeah. That's the habit, I think.

WN: How about Saturday, Sunday? You folks open, too?

HY: Yeah, Sunday, half a day. From Monday to Sunday. Only Sunday, we used to close half a day. But still yet, the customers, they go come, "Oh, something we want, something we want." So, if I stay home, I have to go and open for them, too. Near, that's why, the store. We was living near, so.

WN: What was the most popular item that you sold in the store?

HY: That anpan doughnuts was popular. Everybody used to like that. And turnover.

That's why, now demo, if I go Kahului, the Portuguese, they go ask, "You still make that kind stuff?" (Laughs) They like to eat, they said.

But, I said, "No." "For myself, I make, but not for sell," I said. "Enough, already."

WN: How much was one doughnut?

HY: Three for ten cents was. Now, they charging forty cents or thirty-five cents, I think. One anpan. They charging thirty-five or forty cents, I think.

WN: What if you like buy only one?

HY: Oh, one, no. They used to buy three for ten cents. If three for ten cents, I'd sell; they'd go buy. And the biscuit was two for five cents, you know, when I used to make--was long time, before. Sushi was one [for] five cents. (Laughs) How much now? About thirty cents or thirty-five, yeah?

WN: Cone sushi?

HY: One cone sushi.

WN: So, all the time you had your store--from 1936 to 1962--you ever had to raise your prices?

HY: No, we didn't raise, yeah? The anpan doughnut, [before] I went [to Hamakua Poko], he didn't make. He didn't know how to make that one, so. I made after about one year or two year after [I came]. I tried, and they all like, so I used to make regular every day.

WN: People would pay cash all the time for the anpan?

HY: [HY misunderstands question.] Yes. Electric stove, too, we had. That, two electric stove and one gas stove.

WN: No, when they paid, they paid by cash? Some people charge?

HY: Yeah. Some people charge, but some people, they pay cash.

WN: Anybody can charge?

HY: Yeah, but from far place, they don't charge. Only the [Hamakua Poko] camp people [charged]. All the Haliimaile, and sometime from Kahului, they used to come buy the pastries. Not the groceries--they have groceries down Kahului, plenty, that's why they don't buy, but.

WN: So, the pastries that you made, and then, you folks sold groceries, too, little bit? Which one sold more? Which one you made more money?

HY: Pastries. Pastry was more, I think. Yeah, pastry was more.

WN: Plenty more?

HY: Yeah. Because every day, I have to make. Pastry and sushi, like that.

WN: By the end of the day, what if you had leftover pastry, like that?

HY: Oh, no, I don't make too much. Just enough for one day, yeah? But, biscuit and turnover, if leftover, it can sell next day, yeah? It doesn't come hard or dry. But cone sushi, I don't make too much.

WN: One bowl saimin cost how much?

HY: Ten cents, one bowl (laughs) when we was making, yeah? After that, they were selling for fifteen cents. One bowl. This much bowl, yeah? Was ten cents before. Now, you think, ah, pohō. (Laughs) Nowadays, they make big money, I think. I know the [price of soup] stock is high, too, but still yet, I think they making money.

WN: Did your husband deliver at all to the camps?

HY: No, no. No. They used to come and buy. Everybody used to come and buy, so we didn't deliver. Even H. Poko Store, too, I think. Oh, when they had the big store in down camp, they used to deliver, I think.

WN: Paia Store?

HY: No. H. Poko [plantation store]. They had two store, yeah? One in camp and one way down by the road. Over there, they had post office. You didn't see that old mill?

WN: Yeah, I know the mill [the ruins of the old Hamakua Poko mill].

HY: Yeah, right above that, they had store. And one was way up, yeah? Upper than my store.

WN: So, they used to deliver?

HY: Yeah, the down store was. Camp store, they don't deliver, I think.

WN: People from Kahului stores or Paia Store--did they come to deliver and take orders?

HY: In the camp? Oh, yeah. I think they used to come from Paia Mercantile. Paia Mercantile and Seki Store. Yeah, Paia Mercantile, and Seki Store, and Paia [plantation] Store. That's all, I think.

WN: When you gave credit to somebody--when you let somebody charge--when they had to pay you back?

HY: Payday. When they get pay from the plantation. One month, one time.

WN: Everybody paid?

HY: No, some, they go run away, yeah? (Laughs) Plenty people . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: So, did you try to tell them to pay?

HY: Yeah, but some, they run away, eh? They go some other island, so they don't pay.

WN: Did lot of people do that?

HY: No, not too much. I think I had some bills Oh, last month, I throw away all. I had the bills from that time, you know.
(Laughs) No sense. That's why I throw away.

WN: You used to send them bill?

HY: No. They used to come pay at the store.

WN: Did you have to know the person before you gave him credit?

HY: Yeah, yeah. You have to know, eh?

WN: What if somebody you don't know came and asked for credit . . .

HY: No, no. We don't charge, that kind. Only the [people living in the] camp. What we have is the plantation number, yeah?

WN: The bangō?

HY: They get the bangō number, so we charge from that. They give the name and the bangō.

WN: But people from other camps had bangō, too, eh?

HY: Bangō, but we don't charge those people. From other camp, we don't charge. Only the same camp--H. Poko people, see?

WN: People that came to your store was mostly Japanese people?

HY: No, the Filipino was more. Japanese, they move all. That's why, Filipino was more. That was what year was? Nineteen I don't know what year was, though. They take the Filipino from H. Poko to Paia. They been take thirty-something people. So, that much, our customers, lose, eh?

WN: Was this before the war?

HY: No, after. After, ka. Before, I think. I don't remember. (Pause) They said they go broke down H. Poko, so they been move the people, some. After that, one go out; two go out, like that. That's why the camp come small.

WN: Maybe after the war, yeah?

HY: Oh, they had some more people, but I closed down in 1962. But

some people stayed till 1965, made outa ka shiran [I don't know if they stayed until then]. Nineteen sixty-four [1964] or 1965. More than that, I think. Some people was [still] there after I close, yeah? That's why, they don't have store, that time.

WN: Did you give anything away free to customers?

HY: Oh, sometime, pastry, like that. When we closed, I gave plenty away to the friends who helped me. When I moved here [HY's present home in Pukalani], they helped me, so I gave them.

WN: Like holidays, did you open the store? Christmas, New Years?

HY: No. Christmas, New Year, I used to close. But still yet, they said, "Something no 'nough, that's why, open for me." (Laughs) If I stay home, I have to open for them.

WN: You know, you open at 4:30 [a.m.]; you close at 9 o'clock [p.m.]. You remember how much money you made in one day?

HY: Oh, first time was around One day, how many? (Pause) Before I closed, was little, though. About ten or twelve dollars, like that, sometime. So, ah, mo' betta close.

WN: About 1962, yeah?

HY: Yeah.

WN: Before the war, about how much in one day?

HY: Before the war, I don't know. My husband used to do all that. (Pause) About seventy-something [dollars], I think, was.

WN: During the war, it got even higher than that? Because of the soldiers?

HY: Hire? No, only my daughter and one girl used to come and help. Only when the Marines come. Every morning, some of them come.

WN: Business was better?

HY: Marines used to stay at H. Poko, way down by Takemoto's place? Mink.

WN: Oh, Patsy Mink?

HY: Yeah, Patsy Mink. Around there, they had Marine camp. So, they used to come. But if their duty time, they no can come. They have to stay in camp. But when they get

WN: Leave?

HY: Yeah.

WN: So, the soldiers used to buy your anpan, too?

HY: Marines, they don't care too much about that kind beans kind stuff, yeah? Haole. But turnovers, like that, they used to buy. They like sandwich. They used to like that hamburger steak. Big like that, we used to make it, with fry potato. They drink coffee.

WN: When you sold the anpan, how would you display it?

HY: Inside the box. Or in the package. If little bit, I put in the package. Some, they buy only ten cents or twenty cents [worth]. That kind time, I put all in the package, but big order, I put in the box.

WN: So, in H. Poko, your store was the only store that they could get anpan and pastries?

HY: Oh, at camp [plantation] store, they had snails, like that. And [they had] different kind anpan from Nashiwa [Bakery]. Bread, yeah? But, the camp store don't have [the] kind I make.

WN: Yours more better, eh?

HY: Yeah, yeah. (Laughs)

WN: How about the prices of their anpan compared to your prices?

HY: Oh, from Nashiwa one--I buy from Nashiwa--same price. But [the kind] I make, is different because they [Nashiwa] don't have. They don't know. Only myself, I make, that's why. Oh, it was cheap, before. Even the turnover is ten cents, was. Biscuit was two for five cents. Cone sushi was five cents one, too. Only that anpan doughnut, I raised the price. Because before, was two for five cents, but afterward, I sell three for ten cents.

WN: That's the only change you made?

HY: Yeah, yeah.

WN: How come you had to raise the price?

HY: Because the price come up from the groceries--that flour or sugar, like that. It came up, so.

WN: Did you ever have to remodel the store at any time?

HY: Oh, my husband always like touch around inside the store, that's why. One time, I got sick. I stayed in bed for about I went hospital. Then I came back, I see inside the store--it's all different. (Laughs) He get partition in the store, yeah? For eat saimin, like that.

I said, "Why you go put that kind partition?"

But he like to touch. Oh, every time, he like hammering inside the house. Oh, me, I didn't like it. Yeah, and then, he been make one room behind the store. The carpenter came and made.

WN: What did he put inside the room?

HY: He made to put the other kind stuff--safe, like that, yeah? He like to touch inside the house. It was old house.

WN: The house or the store?

HY: Store. (Laughs)

WN: What other kind equipment you folks had in the store? You folks had cash register?

HY: Yeah, we had. Old kind. Cash register and two, big ice box. And ice cream box. To put the pastry inside--with glass all [i.e., glass showcase]. That one, we had. And we had that kind, three [glass showcases]. Some was to put envelope, like that--the paper kind stuff [i.e., stationery]. It come dirty, yeah, if paper kind stuff stay out [in the open], so. Pastry stuff, we used to put two.

WN: How you folks got the shelves and the tables, like that?

HY: Oh, he used to have. He had when I went.

WN: Oh, was there already?

HY: Uh huh [yes].

WN: You were telling me that your husband had a billiard parlor across the store?

HY: Yeah, he had. Two table, he had. Beside the store. Here, this is the billiard parlor. [HY examines photograph.]

WN: Across the street from the store, yeah?

HY: This is the store, and this is the billiard parlor, and that is our home.

WN: So, the billiard parlor was across the way from the store, yeah? Who watched the billiard parlor?

HY: Filipino. Two Filipino men was working for us, see? They used to watch. That's why, the billiard parlor, he [HY's husband] didn't watch. Just he owned that one.

WN: He made plenty money with that?

HY: I don't know. I don't pay attention that kind, that's why I don't know.

WN: Did people come to the store to meet their friends and talk story, like that?

HY: No. Only sometimes, the ladies come over. When they meet together, they go talk about camp people. Some ladies come and talk story with me when I'm not busy. But when I'm busy, they'll buy, and they go home right away. (Chuckles)

WN: People used to gamble or anything around the store?

HY: Outside, sometimes, yeah. They go deliver something, and they meet together, yeah? They go play sometimes, but not every time. The Marines wanted to play inside our store, so I said no.

"You folks not supposed to play inside here, because when the police come, no good, that's why."

So, they didn't play. First time, they used to play two or three times, but I told them not to play inside there. They stopped. I don't know inside the billiard parlor, though, because I don't go in there. (Laughs)

WN: Did you do any other favors? Did you do things like write letters for customers to send Japan or anything like that?

HY: Uh uh [no].

WN: Did you ever have to make any kind donations?

HY: Yeah, yeah. Church, like that. We used to make donation when they come ask, yeah?

WN: What about during the strikes?

HY: Yeah, we made little bit. We gave some potatoes, like that. Some people, they don't have food, so they used to cook at the clubhouse [i.e., soup kitchen], I think, was.

WN: You used to cook any of your anpan, turnover . . .

HY: No, no. They don't ask that kind. They used to serve only lunch and dinner, was, I think. Breakfast, they don't serve, I think.

WN: Oh, at the clubhouse? So, you closed the store in 1962, yeah? When did you start to notice that not too many customers coming in . . .

HY: They all go out, that's why.

WN: After the war?

HY: They move in Paia [from Hamakua Poko], like that. That's why. After the war. After the war year, they been move thirty-three parents [i.e., families], I think, to Paia. I think was thirty-three.

WN: Whose idea was it to close the store?

HY: From the plantation. Oh, no, for I close? Oh, myself. [It was HY's own decision.] And I wanted to go Mainland, that time. My son get married, so I went. I closed April, then July, they got married, so I went Mainland, and I stayed two years. Then I came back. After that, I go, but I don't stay too long like when I went first time, yeah?

WN: So, from 1936 when you opened to 1962 when you closed . . .

HY: Nineteen thirty-six [1936], he had. [HY's husband already had the store in 1936.]

WN: I mean, when you came. What changes did you see? Did you notice anything different between 1936 and 1962?

HY: Oh yeah, the groceries, like that. He didn't sell before--groceries. But after that, we used to sell groceries. So, he have to fix the shelf, like that.

WN: So, about when did he do that? Start selling groceries?

HY: Oh, about 1940, I think. Nineteen forty [1940] or 1945, I think. If I knew, you going come check like that (laughs), I was going write down all, I think. I don't think about anything, but.

WN: You can check later. Okay, your husband died 1954, yeah? How did your work change after he died?

HY: Same. I used to work regular--same.

WN: You didn't have more work?

HY: No, same. I used to sell groceries. Oh, meat, I didn't sell after he died because [it was his job] to go to the meat market and bring home. But after he died, nobody go take, eh? My son, little while he helped, but then he went in the army, so nobody to go get the meat. So, I didn't sell meat, fish.

WN: Oh, so after your husband died, you stopped selling meat and fish?

HY: Yeah, yeah. We closed it. I closed . . .

WN: Anything else?

HY: No, other stuff, they [wholesalers] used to deliver, so I used to

sell everything. Only the meat and fish.

WN: You never learned how to drive?

HY: I scared. (Laughs) My son wanted to teach me, but I scared.

WN: So, you didn't have any more duties or things to do after your husband died?

HY: Inside the store? No. Same, all. He used to get sick every time, and he have to go hospital. One year, sometime, three times, he used to go--sick in the hospital. And we have to pay that one [medical bills], all, before.

WN: So, after 1962, what happened to the store?

HY: Broke down.

WN: They broke right away?

HY: Yeah, yeah. I think they been broke down right away. Now, all cane field, over there. All the houses is broke down. They was giving notice every time--the plantation. They want to make cane field over there. I don't want to stay till last minute. So, ah, mo' betta I go close in 1962. It good chance to go Mainland.

WN: So, as you look back, are you happy with what you accomplished?

HY: Oh, yeah. I was sixty [years old] when I closed that store. And from sixty-two, I got my social security.

WN: Do you have any more last things you want to say about your life and your store?

HY: (Laughs) No. I can't remember everything. (Laughs)

WN: Well, thank you very much.

HY: Oh, no. (Laughs) I don't know if it's okay or not.

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and
STOREKEEPERS of
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

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